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PP RUEHBZ RUEHROV  
DE RUCNDT #1207/01 3552332  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 212332Z DEC 07  
FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3411  
INFO RUEHKK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 USUN NEW YORK 001207

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [KPAL](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: DECEMBER MIDDLE EAST BRIEFING: PRAISE FOR PARIS,  
CALL FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF ROADMAP

¶1. (U) Summary: UN Under Secretary-General for Political Affairs Lynn Pascoe delivered the monthly briefing on the Middle East to the Security Council on December 21. Pascoe praised the Paris donors' conference but said the goal now is to generate "real momentum on all aspects of the peace process." Pascoe described the current impasse in Lebanon as "dangerous and unsustainable" and urged all Lebanese leaders to seek a solution that enables presidential elections to take place immediately. During informal consultations, most Council members welcomed the Paris conference but identified continued Palestinian attacks on Israel from Gaza and ongoing settlement activity by the Israelis as real threats to the process launched in Annapolis. Most delegations called on the Lebanese to hold elections and criticized Israeli overflights of Lebanon. Russian DPR Dolgov said Russia is engaged in talks with both parties about a "possible" Moscow conference, and reported that Russia is seeking to convene both Israel and Syria in an effort to promote a comprehensive peace. The Council concluded by adopting a brief press statement proposed by the French on the Paris donors' conference (text in para 7). End Summary.

Pascoe Presents Update

¶2. (U) Under Secretary-General for Political Affairs Lynn Pascoe delivered the monthly briefing on the Middle East in a public briefing of the UN Security Council December 21. Pascoe said the next few months are critical for the renewed peace process between Israel and the Palestinians. Solid progress will be essential in the bilateral negotiations. He said that donors must follow through on their commendable Paris commitments, and the parties must act to fulfill their responsibilities, so that a new climate of confidence, security and physical mobility is established. Pascoe urged all Lebanese leaders to seek a solution that enables presidential elections to take place immediately. While condemning rocket and mortar attacks from Gaza into Israel, Pascoe also said Israel needed to freeze settlement activity, and expressed concern about the humanitarian situation in Gaza, aggravated by the ongoing closure of the crossing points. While publicly calling for the Lebanese to move immediately to Presidential elections, Pascoe also cited an increase in Israeli air violations of UNSCR 1701 and regretted that Israel has not yet provided requested technical strike data on cluster munitions.

¶3. (U) Invited to speak privately to Council members, Pascoe recalled a feeling of optimism at the Paris conference, saying that more money was raised than was expected. But he reported a "strong feeling of frustration" on the impasse in Lebanon and said the failure to hold Presidential elections had fostered a "poisoned environment." He called on the Council to keep an eye on the situation.

Council Comments: Ambassador Khalilzad,s Intervention

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14. (U) Following Pascoe's formal presentation, Amb Khalilzad spoke of the three types of efforts underway in pursuit of the two-state solution. First, the Israelis and Palestinians held two follow-up meetings to Annapolis, including at the Paris Donors Conference where \$7.4 billion was pledged. Khalilzad urged everyone to deliver on their commitments. Second, he spoke of the need for the international community to support the development of the Palestinian private sector and build Palestinian capacity. Third, Amb Khalilzad brought to the attention of all President Bush's scheduled visit to the Middle East from January 8-16. On Lebanon, Khalilzad spoke of U.S. concerns that the Lebanese have been unable to exercise their democratic right to elect a president. He said, "We urge the minority within the opposition in Lebanon who are blocking the elections, and those outside Lebanon who support it, particularly Syria, to cease their demands to bring about an election via unconstitutional measures." He also said the Council should be prepared to consider additional measures to support the legitimate government of Lebanon.

#### Other Delegations Comment

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15. (U) All delegations praised the Annapolis Conference and the Paris Donor Conference. They focused on Roadmap obligations, including a freeze on settlements and a cessation of terrorist attacks against Israel. Delegations also urged Israel to do more on freedom of movement and access. While delivering a generally balanced statement, Qatari PR Nasser also lamented Israel's "policy of siege and starvation" in violation of international law. Many delegations also cited the need to restore Palestinian unity.

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Russian DPR Dolgov, while confirming Russian support for President Abbas, said Russia is "absolutely convinced" that no agreement between Israel and the PA can be implemented without restoration of Palestinian unity.

16. (U) Dolgov also said Russia is working with the parties on a possible Moscow conference. The goal of an international meeting remains on the Russian desk. He reported that Russia is thinking about how to arrange bilateral talks between Israel and Syria in support of a comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Qatar and China said that they looked forward to the upcoming Middle East conference in Moscow. Qatari PR Nasser characterized the Moscow conference as "promising" and added that he "hopes that it is a real beginning."

#### Discussion of Press Statement

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17. (U) The French proposed a draft press statement on the donors' conference in Paris. Russia, China, Qatar, and Indonesia sought a reference to UNSC resolution 1515, which endorsed the Roadmap. USUN recalled that in Annapolis the parties had agreed to direct negotiations on the implementation of the Roadmap, and urged the Council to respect the parties' preference and limit the Council's comment to the Paris conference. The Council agreed and adopted the following statement:

18. (U) Draft Press Statement: The situation in the Middle East

The members of the Security Council welcome the international donors' conference for the Palestinian State held in Paris on 17th December which has provided a strong international signal of support to the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Authority and which constitutes an important step in a broader process aiming at the realization of the vision of two states living side by side in peace and security;

The members of the Security Council thank all participants for their pledges, urge a rapid disbursement of these pledges, based on equitable burden-sharing among all donors and call upon all those states and international organizations in a position to do so to assist in the development of the Palestinian economy, to maximize the resources available to the Palestinian Authority, and to contribute to the Palestinian institution-building programme in preparation for statehood.

The members of the Security Council reaffirm their commitment to a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) as well as the other relevant Security Council resolutions.  
Khalilzad